

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /114 W
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R 181026Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1804

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0555

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS SO ET

SUBJ: SOMALI REACTION TO ETHIOPIAN SITUATION

REF: MOGADISCIO 0444

1. GSDR CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN "HANDS-OFF" PUBLIC STANCE REGARDING ETHIOPIA. NO EDITORIALS AND, INDEED, A REDUCED LEVEL OF WIRE SERVICE REPORTS ON ETHIOPIA ARE BEING CARRIED BY LOCAL PRESS. MUCH OF SOMALI GOVERNMENT ENERGY IS NOW DEVOTED TO PREPARATION FOR OAU SUMMIT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MOGADISCIO IN EARLY JUNE. NO EVIDENCE OF UNUSUAL MILITARY ACTIVITY OR ALERT IN MOGADISCIO AREA, ALTHOUGH NORMAL MILITARY TRAINING EXERCISES WERE HELD RECENTLY AND SOVIET SHIPS CONTINUE TO DELIVER WHAT WE SUSPECT ARE CONTAINERS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

2. GENERAL SIAD WAS TOURING SOUTHERN SOMALIA FOR THREE WEEKS (MARCH 24 - APRIL 11), A PERIOD WHICH COINCIDED WITH HEIGHT OF ETHIOPIAN CRISIS. HE RETURNED IN TIME FOR SOMALI ARMY DAY, APRIL 12, WHEN HE STATED THAT ARMY WAS READY TO DEFEND COUNTRY FROM "EXTERNAL AND INTENAL ENEMIES", BUT BALANCED THIS MILDLY BELLICOSE STATEMENT WITH PRAISE OF ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR ROLE
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IN NATION BUILDING. IN LONGER STATEMENT, VICE PRESIDENT AND

DEFENSE SECRETARY SAMANTAR ALSO EMPHASIZED NON-MILITARY THEME AND MADE NO MENTION OF EXTERNAL THREAT OR IRREDENTIST GOALS. HE EXPLAINED THAT ARMY HAD BEEN BUILT UP FROM COLONIALIST AND IMPERIALIST NEGLECT AND, BECAUSE OF ITS GOOD LEADERSHIP, HAD ESCAPED INVOLVEMENT WITH PRIOR REGIME'S CORRUPT POLITICIANS. ARMY WAS "NATIONALIST, LOYAL AND RESPONSIBLE". LOCAL PRESS PUBLISHED CONGRATULATORY ARMY DAY MESSAGE FROM SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO WHICH "WISHED SOMALIA SUCCESSES IN STRENGTHENING ITS DEFENSIVE POTENTIAL AND ENSURING...FREEDOM AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE SOMALI PEOPLE".

3. WHILE INFLUX OF ARAB AND OTHER VISITORS HAS SLACKENED SOMEWHAT FROM EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH LEVEL OF MARCH, THE LOCAL SCENE IS VERY MUCH BUSINESS AS USUAL. IF SOMALIS ARE PLANNING MILITARY INTERVENTION AT TIME OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENTAL WEAKNESS, THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CONCEALED EVIDENCE OF PREPARATIONS FOR SUCH ACTION.

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